RAJYA SABHA

Wednesday, the 17th May, 2006/ the 27th Vaisakha, 1928 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock.

MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

*461. [The questioner (Shri Thanga Tamil Selvan) was absent. For answer *vide* page 21]

*462. [The questioner (Dr. M.A.M. Ramaswamy) was absent. For answer *vide* page 25]

*463. [The questioner (Shri S.S. Ahluwalia) was absent. For answer *vide* page 26]

DRDO global tie-ups in Aerospace

*464. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state

(a) whether it is a fact that the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) proposes to have global tie-ups in aerospace;

(b) if so, the details and present status thereof; and

(c) what is Government's action plan to evolve a road map for preparing the country to meet the demands of network-centric warfare of the future?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) DRDO is making steady progress in Aeronautics/Aerospace oriented programmes. Reputed design-houses, consultants, manufacturing industry abroad have been contracted for certain technologies. Interaction with foreign agencies is expected to expedite further development of system related to LCA.

(c) The Armed Forces have recognized the potential of 'Network Centric Warfare' To leverage information superiority, in order to enhance combat power, a number of systems are in the process of being developed. At the Strategic level, fielding of a Tri-Services backbone communication network is being progressed by Tri-service Project Management Organisation. To set up a Defence Communication Network, presently, Request For Proposal is under finalization.

SHRI B.J. PANDA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, my first supplementary is regarding the hon. Ministers' statement that reputed design-houses and consultants abroad are being consulted. Sir, my question has to do with the Indian capacity for doing these same things. This, 'Network Centric Warefare' requires a lot of information technology input and also 'Optical backbone Network' throughout the country. And in both these areas Indian companeis, both in public sector and in private sector have developed a lot of knowledge over the last 15 years. The question that I have for the hon. Minister is: Has he any plans to involve Indian companies like the BSNL or the HAL on this and also involve the private sector? If so, could he spell out what are his plans to encourage Indian participation?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, our whole policy is to encourage the indigenous Indian industries, especially, in the areas which have been developed. Therefore, the BSNL and the BEL and other Indian companies which have developed the expertise in these areas would surely be looked into. But, what I have specifically pointed out is, and we ourselves, the DRDO, as you know, in the development of system, platform, technology, are involving a number of the Indian industrial houses in some of these areas for quite a long time, even in our missile programmes. Therefore, even in this ara, to take advantage of the expertise which we have developed over the years, we are encouraging collaboration with both foreign and indigenous companies.

SHRI B.J. PANDA: Sir, I am happy to note that the hon. Minister has clearely stated that Indian companies will be encouraged to participate. I would like to know whether there is an overall vision as to within the next decade or in the next 15 years what percentage of these contracts will be given out to Indian entities: and whether there is any plan to encourage them so that they come to that level.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, it would be difficult to quantify what percentage of contracts would be placed to them over a period of 10—15 years. This much I can suggest or tell emphatically that as far as possible, as and when we develop to meet our requirements from their services, we would like to encourage more and more the Indian involvement. If it is available indigenously, naturally, we would like to give it to them and our objective would be, ultimately, to reach the maximum extent possible within a possible framework of time.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Sir, in a global tie-up, it is assumed that close coordination and cooperation in terms of exchange of information and technology between the two tie-ups are necessary. What I am trying to ask is whether while doing so, will there not be a possibility of our military secrets becoming open? ...(*Interruptions*)... By way of interaction, by way of exchange of information, etc., between two tie-ups, will our military secrets not come out?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, so far as the security aspect is concerned, all steps are being taken to ensure the security concerns. But when we go in for such tie-ups,—it is not only in the areas of information technology, but in other technologies also—when we buy technologies, we incorporate it, and there is an understanding everywhere, all over the world, that the technology-supplier would not divulge it and protect the interests of the clients. That is the general understanding all over the world, and so far as this particular aspect is concerned, we take appropriate steps to ensure our security concerns.

DR. K. KASTURIRANGAN: Through you, Sir, may I seek a clarification from the hon. Minister regarding DRDO? I would like to know whether the DRDO in future would be the focal agency in the context of technology acquisition, absorption and operationalisation, wherever we have to acquire technology from outside. And, if so, what is the institutional framework internally which the Defence Organisation is setting up to ensure that we do this efficiently?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, it is a good suggestion from the hon. Member who has knowledge in this area. We would like to ensure that DRDO becomes more and more involved in absorbing technologies from the foreign countries where we are importing technologies, apart from developing it indigenously, because they have the necessary infrastructure; about fifty laboratories are under thier control. So, we would

like to involve the DRDO more, and keeping that objective in view, the necessary infrastructure, internal arrangements, etc., are always upgraded and developed there. It is done keeping in view the requirements. Therefore, it will be a constant exercise. It is just not like stop and go. It is a continuous exercise.

DR. KARAN SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, four decades ago, when I was the Minister for Civil Aviation, we used to make a plane for civilian purposes, the Avro. It was being made at HAL. But now we seem to have regressed because we are not making any civilian aircraft at all in this country. Now, Sir, there is a great demand for aircraft for short hauls. There is a tremendous market potential in Asia and Africa. So, would the Minister let us know, whether, apart from military requirements which obviously get priority, is there any proposal being considered to manufacture a civilian aircraft also in India? We are one of the few countries that can do so. Why should we not do it?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, I would love to do that. But, surely, I would not like to bite more than what I can chew. So far as the HAL's order books are concerned, it is too full to meet their requirements. The technology is available here, and I do hope, very shortly, many of the prospective private sectors should also like to come forward for manufacturing our own aircraft, and they are encouraged. Even in the Defence production, I am encouraging the private sector to come, so that, to that extent, we can reduce our burden, and it would be easy to absorb technology from abroad through the private sector participation.

श्री मुख्तार अब्बास नकवी: सभापति महोदय, माननीय रक्षा मंत्री महोदय ने जो आश्वासन दिया है कि घरेलू कम्पनियां-चाहे वे सूचना के क्षेत्र में हों, चाहे अन्य तकनीकी क्षेत्रों में हों-उनको प्राथमिकता दी जाएगी। यह आश्वासन कई बार रक्षा मंत्री महोदय के माध्यम से इस सदन में आ चुका है। मैं केवल यह पूछना चाहता हूं कि विश्व में आज-चाहे रक्षा के क्षेत्र हो, चाहे अन्य क्षेत्र हो-जब हमारी घरेलू कम्पनियां तकनीकी क्षेत्र में अपना महत्वपूर्ण स्थान बना चुकी हैं। रक्षा के क्षेत्र में विश्व के तमाम ऐसे देश हैं... । जो कि उनके द्वारा निर्मित सामग्रियों को लेते हैं, लेकिन उसके साथ शिकायत करते हैं कि जब भारत में आपका प्रामाणिक सामान है और इतने अच्छे सामान को नहीं लिया जाता, तो हम क्यों लें? माननीय रक्षा मंत्री जी, हम यह पूछना चाहते हैं कि कब तक इन घरेलू कंपनियों की प्रामाणिक सामग्री, चाहे वह सूचना के क्षेत्र में हो, चाहे तकनीकी क्षेत्र में हो, उसको कब तक आप लेना शुरू करेंगे और कब तक उनको प्रोत्साहित करना शुरू करेंगे?

श्री सभापति: प्रोत्साहन करना तो शुरू कर दिया है, लेने की बात कीजिए।

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, we are already taking steps, and we are already encouraging, and this particular aspect has been dealt with in the question, I think the one after the next, and if the question comes up for discussion, I would be able to give more details. But I can assure the hon. Member that even in some of the missile programmes. L&T is fully involved, Tata is fully involved. As far as manufacturing of some of the platforms is concerned, a number of private Indian companies are fully involved in manufacture of platforms.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question; Q. No. 465

घाटी से सेना को वापस बुलाना

*465. श्री बलवंत उर्फ बाल आपटे: क्या रक्षा मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार घाटी से पूरी तरह से सेना हटाने के पक्ष में है;

(ख) यदि नहीं, तो क्या उपसेनाध्यक्ष का "सद्भावना अभियान" में दिया गया इस संबंध में बयान सरकार के दृष्टिकोण से अलग है; और

(ग) क्या इतनी अधिक संख्या में आतंकवादियों के गिरफतार होने तथा उक्त बयान से स्थानीय नागरिकों में भय पैदा नहीं होगा?

रक्षा मंत्री (श्री प्रणव मुखर्जी) (क) जम्मू-कश्मीर में तैनात सैनिकों की संख्या का बदलते हुए खतरे की संभावना के आधार पर सेना सतत रूप से मूल्यांकन करती है और उसकी समीक्षा करती है।

(ख) दोनों उप सेनाध्यक्षों में से किसी ने भी कोई बयान नहीं दिया था। ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि जिस बयान का हवाला दिया गया है वह सह सेनाध्यक्ष का है जो 12 मई, 2006 को क्षेत्रीय समाचार-पत्रों में प्रकाशित हुआ था। जम्मू-कश्मीर से सैनिकों को हटाए जाने के बारे में सह सेनाध्यक्ष के बयान को मीडिया ने गलत ढंग से प्रस्तुत किया है।

(ग) सरकार द्वारा किए गए अन्य उपायों के साथ-साथ सेना, अन्य सुरक्षा बलों और राज्य पुलिस द्वारा आतंकवादियों के विरुद्ध कड़ी कार्रवाइयों से जम्मू-कश्मीर में शांति के अनुकूल माहौल बना है। इसे देखते हुए स्थानीय लोगों में यदि किसी प्रकार का कोई डर है तो वह निराधार है।